
TAKING THE **WHOLE WORD** TO THE **WHOLE WORLD**

THE
Christmas story
BEGAN IN A GARDEN
WHEN GOD CAME
looking for us.

J. VERNON MCGEE



THRUtheBIBLE



WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

THE BIGGER STORY BEFORE THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Dr. J. Vernon McGee

Invite your family around the table, or around the tree, and read the Christmas story together this year. Prepare your heart to hear the story told in a fresh way—as well as gain new insights like “What was that star?” and pointing out the place the shepherds trembled at the sight of angels in the sky. An easy question/answer format helps the young and old in faith follow along.

The story is old, but the promise of a Savior is a gift waiting to be unwrapped by anyone with faith to receive it.

The Christmas story is simple: Someone has come to rescue us.

Rescue us from what? Read all the way to the end where you'll find the offer of the best Christmas gift ever.

FIRST QUESTION: When Did the Real Christmas Story Begin?

When the Christmas season comes around every year, our thoughts turn to all the bright and beautiful things surrounding our holiday celebration. Many times on Christmas mornings, Christian families gather around as someone reads “the Christmas story,” usually in Luke 2.

But the real Christmas story begins much earlier than that, back in a world so wonderful, it defies our imagination. Christmas began in a garden! Let's see how it all got started from Genesis 2.

When Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, they lived together in harmony with animals and nature. But that all changed when Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan rather than believe God. They lost all authority over this earth, and today we have no control at all. The floods, tornados, earthquakes, and extreme weather conditions all over the world prove that.

Then there came the test involving the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” *Don't eat it*, God said. No one thought the test was whether the forbidden tree was good for food or not; it probably offered the sweetest and juiciest fruit in the garden. The test was, “Will Adam and Eve obey God?”

Sadly, we know the rest of the story: The serpent tempted them and, rather than believing God, the man and woman believed the serpent. We don't know what the serpent looked like, but aside from humans, it was probably the highest creature God created. It was also able to communicate, which explains why Satan chose it as his evil instrument.



Continue in
“The Christmas Story.”
Download it for free [here](#).

When Adam and Eve believed Satan rather than God and ate of the tree, they had to hide themselves from God’s presence (see Genesis 3:1-8). No more could they walk with God in the Garden in the cool of the day. No more long conversations. Their choice cut them off from God.

And that is where we still are today. No one has a natural bent for God. Our nature hates God, and our old carnal nature *can’t* be a friend of God. That was the consequence when Adam and Eve ate of the tree, and immediately they tried to get away from Him.

But God didn’t let them run away. He went looking for them. He looks for us today, too.

LAST QUESTION: Why Did Jesus Come?

The Christmas story is usually thought to be about a birth, the beginning of life. But it’s really about death. Our death. Jesus Christ was born into this world to destroy our greatest enemy—the enemy that no doctor, no scientist, no world ruler can deal with, because death deals with all of *them*. When death knocks, they have to put down whatever they are doing. (See Hebrews 9:27 and Romans 5:12, 19.)

Death is the result of sin that entered our world back in the beginning of the human family. We all sinned in Adam. Now, we’re all born with a sin nature, and death follows. Until we come to Jesus Christ, we’re eternally separated from God. He alone can make us righteous. Christ came to deal with that sin nature, which no man can deal with. It’s the last enemy that will be destroyed. As He takes our sin in His death on the cross, He gives us His righteousness.

Now when you die, you will join Jesus in heaven. Either you have as much right in heaven as Christ has, or you have no right there at all. Your right is His right, for He has made over to you all that He is.

That’s the only thing that can get you and me to heaven, my friend. Over 2000 years ago, He took upon Himself our humanity that we might be made righteous and complete in Him.

» MY TURN

Dear Father,

The real Christmas story is so much better than any movie version. Thank You that Your plan to rescue us has been in place since the beginning. Thank You for seeking us out when we were hopeless and dead and desperate in our sins.

Thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate this season and whose life is ours when we acknowledge Him as our Savior. His story becomes our story when His life becomes our life.

Help me share this good news, the greatest gift of all time, with as many people as will listen.

In Jesus’ precious name,

Amen

- If you could describe this Christmas season in a few words, what would it be?
- What about Jesus’ story makes you stop and think?
- What Christian tradition do you do (or want to do) that speaks of Jesus?

FIELD NOTES

TAKING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

THANKS BE TO GOD! GLOBAL RECAP OF 2020

PRAISE GOD FOR HOW HE'S OPENING DOORS FOR HIS WHOLE WORD TO GO AROUND THE WHOLE WORLD.

SOUTH ASIA

Praise the Lord for the continued growth of Home Groups, specifically in Muslim Pakistan and Bangladesh. There is a hunger for the Word of God and *Thru the Bible* teaching (2700+ groups in Pakistan and 1582 groups in Bangladesh). In spite of COVID-19, the *Thru the Bible* Home Group ministry has expanded—now more than 11,500 home groups in South Asia representing almost 117,000 people. *Thru the Bible* content was produced and distributed in India in over 60 different languages.

SOUTH AMERICA

This was our first year of broadcasting on a powerful new network of stations reaching northern Mexico with Spanish-TTB.

It was a blessing to be able to start broadcasting the Brazilian-Portuguese TTB on an FM music station in Sao Paolo starting September 2020 on a very good time of day!

EUROPE

In April we began airing the Dutch-TTB on a secular music station near Amsterdam. This is unprecedented in the Netherlands. The station owner became a Christian several years ago and makes this possible. Pray people will come to know the Lord and His Word through this unique opportunity.

TTB-Slovak launched in June, and we are already getting great responses and activity on social media.

AFRICA

Thank the Lord that the Baoule-TTB for Ivory Coast and the Igbo-TTB for Nigeria got off to a good start earlier this year. We were moved when we learned the Igbo TTB producer chose to be quarantined for 30 days in the studio rather than at home so that the ministry would not be interrupted. During that month of isolation, he translated and produced 30 programs.

We are thankful that the Shona-TTB began “airing” in a hospital in Zimbabwe in February 2020. Since that happened, the hospital bookstore reported an increase in the sale of Bibles. Patients who leave the hospital receive information on how to continue listening to the program. Not only do they receive healing for their bodies, but for their souls as well.

A milestone was reached when the Tigrinya-TTB program for Ethiopia completed translation and production of the full cycle of 1300 programs in March. Besides radio, the producer also uses WhatsApp to distribute programs and follow-up with listeners. He has about 4000 contacts from around the world in his WhatsApp Tigrinya TTB groups.

From Ray Alary when reading WorldPrayerToday, praying for Guinea Bissau:

“If Satan has a foothold anywhere in Africa, this country may be the worst of the worst. **Praise the Lord for TTB’s ministry into Guinea Bissau; it is a light shining in a very dark place.** To get even this one response is such a huge encouragement to me because I helped us get on an FM station there many years ago. This country needs God’s Word badly.”

TURKISH TV

On August 31, we launched our first Turkish TV program via satellite. If response to the Arabic and Farsi TV ministries are any indicator, we have high hopes for the impact of this exciting new initiative, the spread of the Word of God in the Turkish language through *Kutsal Yazilar* (Turkish for “Scriptures”).





GOD IS IN ACTION IN THE AGE OF COVID

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. –Psalm 84:11

Meet Milos who listens to Thru the Bible in Serbia. Be encouraged as he shares his story.

“I have a friend who contracted Covid-19. He was immediately isolated from all of his family, but God used that situation as an opportunity.

“My friend knew I was a Christian and started calling to ask me numerous questions about God, my faith, and other things every day. His spirit was hungry, and he cried out to God. Not long into our discussions, I suggested he listen to Thru the Bible. Dr. McGee’s messages clarified many things to him that were unclear. One evening he prayed with me for God’s forgiveness of sin and he gave his life to Him. It was such an exciting moment for me. I saw God in action, God who is almighty and who can reverse even the most difficult situations

and problems. After three weeks, my friend recovered physically, but spiritually he was a completely new person.

“God’s grace and His plans are wonderful for us. That’s why I want to encourage you too, because what you do changes the lives of many people for the better.”

Praise God for drawing many to Himself through the recent pandemic and thank Him for the reality of Psalm 84:11 in our lives.

This is an example of the email our World Prayer Team receives every weekday. Together, we are traveling the world on our knees, interceding for one country at a time. We invite you to join us in covering the entire earth with prayer every year.

GO TO [TTB.ORG/PRAY](https://ttb.org/pray) TO SIGN UP.



THRU the BIBLE

THE gift of God IS
eternal life
IN CHRIST JESUS
our Lord

–Romans 6:23



MERRY
Christmas
TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY
FROM THE TEAM AT THRU THE BIBLE

Want your year-end gift to Thru the Bible to count towards your 2020 taxes?

Gifts given online or by phone must be received before midnight, December 31.

Gifts received by mail must be postmarked and dated in 2020.

Thru the Bible’s gift annuity program benefits both you and the ministry—

call 1-800-65-BIBLE or write for more information.

“Joy to the world ... the Lord has come!”

Each time you sing that carol this season, I want you to be reminded of something important. Together, in the message and ministry of *Thru the Bible*, we’re bringing that eternal kind of “joy to the world” through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Countless people are listening—worldwide ... and down the street from you.

2020 will be remembered as the year the world went into lockdown. As governments restricted people from moving freely within their localities and around the world, something else was happening. “But the word of God is not chained.” Did you see the truth of 2 Timothy 2:9 happening right in front of us? The world was on lockdown and socially distanced, but God’s Word went even wider and deeper. Isolation and restrictions exposed the hunger in people’s souls and prompted them to think about the deeper issues of life.

Thanks to your faithful support, *Thru the Bible* could meet those needs and see many people meet Jesus Christ as their Savior.

No matter what 2021 brings, we will continue to spread joy to the world.

Let every heart prepare Him room.



Gregg Harris
Thru the Bible, President



WHY STUDY MALACHI?

Join in the studies on *Thru the Bible* DECEMBER 10-30 or anytime online, by podcast, or by mobile app.

Malachi brings down the curtain on the Old Testament. He’s the last in a long line of prophets who foretold with increasing tempo the coming of the Messiah. He was sort of a radio announcer for the Lord. Imagine him saying, “The next voice you hear will be John the Baptist 400 years from now.”

MALACHI MEANS “MESSENGER.”
HE SAYS, HANG IN THERE,
Jesus is coming.

INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT MALACHI’S MESSAGE:

- **It’s a question/answer.** God asks Israel a probing question and they respond with sophisticated sarcasm and proud, even insulting, slander.
- **The people are so sinful** God’s Word has little to no impact on them.
- **They rob God.** They bring leftovers as their sacrifice. They didn’t think it mattered.
- **God’s people criticize Him publicly.** *How can He care and not do anything about the evil in the world?*
- **God wanted to talk to them** about their hypocrisy, infidelity, divorce, false worship, and arrogance.

“In Malachi, the Lord tells Israel how much He loves them. His questions reveal their love for Him is cold. They think they love God, but their actions show how far their hearts are from Him. Through it all, God’s love never changes.” –J. Vernon McGee

KEYVERSE

“... Try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” –Malachi 3:10

I Love to Tell *the Story*

I have a buddy that chats with me about Dr. McGee's teaching most every day of the week. We have agreed that one of the most valuable teachings provided by TTB is on how to pray effectively. The daily pre-teaching prayers are so instructive. If we are out on a walk, we stop in our tracks to pray with either Steve or Gregg and echo their prayers along with them to God. A bonus teaching moment is reading the daily prayers written inside the  **WorldPrayerToday** Team daily updates. They can be taken apart phrase by phrase to plead with the Lord to answer. Every day those prayers seem so fresh and on target with the will of God. They're so uplifting to my faith. I am so grateful there always seems to be an open seat on the bus.

DAVE R. | Huntsville, AL



I have been on the Bible Bus for 27 years. I have sent this little magazine to many nations of the world. The response has been phenomenal! I will be riding the Bible Bus right into heaven!

ANN L.



DECEMBER IS LETTER MONTH!

The *Thru the Bible* family would love to hear your story of how God is using His Word to impact your life.

Send your story by letter, email, phone message, or social media post. We can't wait!



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